

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 06158 061719Z

60

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 6158

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: DRC MULTILATERAL EXAMINATION - BELGIUM

REF: A. USNATO 5827

B. USDELMC 182103Z OCT

C. USNATO 6072

D. STATE 241309

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON NOVEMBER 5, DRC REVIEWED BELGIAN 1975-79 FORCE PLANS. CHAIRMAN HUMPHREYS PRAISED BELGIAN DETERMINATION TO INCREASE REAL TERM DEFENSE SPENDING ANNUALLY BY FOUR PERCENT AND WELCOMED STABILITY INCREASE OFFERS TO DEFENSE PLANNING. DRC INTEREST CENTERED ON PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN; SEVERAL REPS CRITICIZED BELGIAN NON-PARTICIPATION IN HAWK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.
END SUMMARY.

1. DRC ON NOVEMBER 5 CONDUCTED MULTILATERAL REVIEW OF BELGIAN 1975-79 FORCE PLANS AS PRESENTED IN BELGIAN REPLY TO DPQ(74). CHAIRMAN HUMPHREYS' INTRODUCTION CITED STABILITY AS MOST STRIKING FEATURE OF BELGIAN PLAN, PARTICULARLY ANTICIPATED CONTINUED
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NATO 06158 061719Z

FOUR PERCENT ANNUAL REAL TERM INCREASE IN DEFENSE SPENDING. HUMPHREYS ALSO NOTED ON PLUS SIDE THAT BELGIANS, INTER ALIA, WILL A) FUND PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN SEPARATELY FROM (OVER AND ABOVE) FOUR PERCENT REAL TERM INCREASE, B) INCREASE SHARE OF

DEFENSE BUDGET FOR MAJOR EQUIPMENT, C) REPLACE HONEST JOHN WITH LANCE, D) INTRODUCE MODERN ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, AND 3L PROCURE EXOCET SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE; ON MINUS SIDE, HUMPHREYS EMPHASIZED LOW MANNING LEVELS OF CATEGORY A ARMY COMBAT UNITS AND BELGIAN DECISION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN HAWK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HELIP). HUMPHREYS' INTRODUCTION ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO UPCOMING IMPORTANT COMBAT AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT DECISION AND NOTED BELGIUM IS ONLY CENTRAL REGION COUNTRY TO WHICH U.S. DID NOT QUOTE OFFER MARRIAGE UNQUOTE IN ITS SEARCH FOR CO-LOCATED AIR FORCE OPERATING BASES.

2. FOLLOWING HUMPHREYS' INTRODUCTION, MC (GEN VON ZUR GATHEN) AND SHAPE (GEN MILLER) REPS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER BELGIAN NON-PARTICIPATION IN HELIP, PROGRESS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN (ESPECIALLY PACE OF RECRUITMENT AND REDUCTION OF CONSCRIPTION PERIOD TO 10 MONTHS FOR BELGIAN TROOPS SERVING IN FRG), LOW ARMY COMBAT UNIT MANNING LEVEL, AND MOBILIZATION CAPABILITIES.

3. IN RESPONDING, BELGIAN REGULARDRC REP (COL TAYMANS), WHO WAS ASSISTED BY A HORDE OF NATIONAL EXPERTS, EXPLAINED PROFESSIONALIZATION

PLAN BY READING CHAPTER AND VERSE FROM FIRST TWO PAGES OF MEMORANDUM SECTION OF BELGIAN DPQ(74) REPLY AND EXCERPTS FROM BELGIAN MILREP'S (LTG DONNET) OCTOBER 17 STATEMENT TO THE MC (REF B). COL TAYMANS STRESSED THAT AT DECEMBER 1973 DPC MEETING, MINISTERS ACCEPTED BELGIAN PLAN, INCLUDING SUBSTITUTION OF QUALITY FROM QUANTITY. HE FURTHER EMPHASIZED FIVE-YEAR NATURE OF THE PLAN; THAT PLAN DOES NOT CALL FOR REDUCTION NUMBER OF FORCES/PERSONNEL COMMITTED TO NATO; AND THAT TO IMPLEMENT PLAN FULLY, BELGIUM NEEDS TO RECRUIT ABOUT 20 THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS. NATIONAL EXPERT ADDED PLAN CALLS FOR PROGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT OF REGULARS AND SOME OF 20 THOUSAND WILL REPLACE EXISTING PERSONNEL. TO MEET END-1974 OBJECTIVE, BELGIUM NEEDS ONLY 2 THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS (PRINCIPALLY FOR UNITS IN FRG) AND BELGIUM EXPECTS TO HAVE RECRUITED OVER 4 THOUSAND BY DECEMBER 31, 1974; EXPERT CONFIRMED END-1975 OBJECTIVE OF 6,400 VOLUNTEERS IN CUMULATIVE IN THAT IT INCLUDES 1974 OBJECTIVE OF 2 THOUSAND. REGARDING REDUCTION OF CONSCRIPTION PERIOD TO 10 MONTHS
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NATO 06158 061719Z

FOR CONSCRIPTS SERVING IN FRG, EXPERT EXPLAINED REDUCTION WILL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL EARLY 1975 BECAUSE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL NOT MAKE A FINAL DECISION UNTIL SOME IN NOVEMBER. WHEN BELGIUM HAS CARRIED OUT PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN, REGULARS WILL MAKE UP 77 PERCENT OF ARMY, 86 PERCENT OF NAVY, AND 89 PERCENT OF AIR FORCE.

4. US REP (CLINAR) ECHOED CHAIRMAN'S PRAISE OF DEFENSE PLANNING STABILITY OFFERED BY BELGIAN'S DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE REAL TERM DEFENSE SPENDING BY FOUR PERCENT PER ANNUM AND ASKED IF PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN STILL INCLUDED GOAL OF INCREASING ARMY MAJOR COMBAT UNIT MANNING TO 100 PERCENT OF WAR AUTHORIZED STRENGTH (WAS) AND MANNING THESE UNITS EXCLUSIVELY WITH REGULARS. ARMY EXPERT CONFIRMED THAT 100

PERCENT WAS OBJECTIVE STILL EXISTS AND NOTED TIMING IS NOT PRECISE OTHER THAN BEING LINKED TO FIVE-YEAR PROFESSIONALIZATION PLAN. HE INDICATED THAT TO MEET 100 PERCENT WAS OBJECTIVE, ARMY WILL HAVE TO MAN SOME UNITS WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF CONSCRIPTS, BUT MAJORITY OF CONSCRIPTS WILL PERFORM NON-SPECIALIST JOBS AND SERVE IN NON-ORGANIC SUPPORT UNITS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO FRG REP (GEN SCHUNEMANN) QUESTION SPECIAL CALL-UP PROVISIONS FOR RESERVISTS TO FILL OUT COMBAT UNITS, EXPERT SAID IN TIMES OF TENSION MOD CAN RECALL COMPLEMENTAIRE FORCES WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL AND UNITS IN FRG WILL BE AVAILABLE (FULLY MANNED) AT THEIR GDP POSITIONS WITHIN 48 HOURS.

6. NETHERLANDS REP (MAJOR STEENAERT) ASKED WHAT COMPENSATORY MEASURES BELGIUM PLANNED SINCE IT IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN HELIP AND WHAT IMPACT NON-PARTICIPATION WOULD HAVE ON LOGISTIC SUPPORT OF HAWK BELT. SHAPE REP UNDERLINED THAT BELGIUM WILL BE SOLE COUNTRY IN HAWK BELT USING AN OBSOLETE SYSTEM AND HELIP INCREASES HAWK CAPABILITY BY ABOUT 40 PERCENT, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN FACE OF INCREASING AIR THREAT. COL TAYMANS RECOGNIZED INFERIORITY OF HAWK VERSUS IMPROVED HAWK BUT STRESSED BELGIUM IS MAINTAINING CURRENT NUMBER OF UNITS AND LAUNCHERS AND IS IMPROVING TRAINING.

7. NORWEGIAN REP (LEINE) ASKED WHY REDUCTION OF MILITARY OBLIGATIONS FROM 15 TO 8 YEARS ONLY AFFECTED NUMBER OF AIR FORCE RESERVISTS. EXPERT SAID FACT THAT RESERVISTS ON ROLLS FOR ALL THREE SERVICES FAR EXCEEDED NUMBER TO BE RECALLED, CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NATO 06158 061719Z

AS WELL AS SHORTER MILITARY OBLIGATION PERIOD, ENABLED REDUCTION IN TOTAL NUMBER OF RESERVISTS.

8. BELGIAN FINANCIAL EXPERT STRESSED BELGIAN DEFENSE EFFORT IS NOT IMMUNE TO THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS CAUSED BY INFLATION AND ECONOMIC HEALTH OF A SMALL A COUNTRY LIKE BELGIUM IS LINKED TO HEALTH OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND TRADING PARTNERS.

9. IN SUMMING UP, CHAIRMAN SAID MOST OF CLARIFICATIONS PROVIDED BY BELGIAN TEAM WERE ENCOURAGING.

10. UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, CHARIMAN, WHILE RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL SCHEDULING PROBLEMS, SUGGESTED GREATER PERMREP INVOLVEMENT IN DEFENSE PLANNING REVIEW BY HAVING DPC REVIEW COUNTRY CHAPTERS IN QUOTE BATCHES UNQUOTE, I.E. IN THREE SEPARATE MEETINGS BY REGION OR POSSIBLY REVIEWING NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN REGION COUNTRIES AT ONE MEETING AND CENTRAL REGION AT ANOTHER MEETING. CHAIRMAN ASKED DRC REPS TO CONSULT WITH THEIR AMBASSADORS ABOUT THIS APPROACH AND REPORT BACK TO THE DRC AT ITS NOVEMBER 7 OR 8 MEETING. US REP SAID HE FELT US WOULD FAVOR SUGGESTED APPROACH.

11. CHAIRMAN REITERATED HIS REQUEST FOR INITIAL NATIONAL REACTIONS TO INFORMAL DRAFT DPC MINISTERIAL AGENDA AT NOVEMBER 7 DRC MEETING (REF C).

12. PRIOR TO MEETING, CHARIMAN POSTPONED DRC REVIEW OF UK FORCE PLANS UNTIL NOVEMBER 12 BECAUSE IS HAS NOT FINISHED UK DRAFT COUNTRY CHAPTER.
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